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## **Joshua 3**

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Joshua 3.

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### Topics.

- The people of Israel leave Shittim and camp alongside the river Jordan.
- The priests take up the Ark and go before the people.
- The LORD will drive out the seven nations in the land of Canaan.
- The Ark of the Covenant of the LORD is passing over the Jordan.
- Priests with the Ark enter the water and Israel cross the River Jordan.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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**INTRODUCTION:** the first five books of Moses anticipated the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham concerning the Promised Land. Moses is now dead. Joshua crosses the River Jordan (about 1400 B.C.) and after a string of military victories apportioned the land according to the twelve tribes. These battles shine a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that God fights for His people when they are faithful and courageous and put their full trust in Him. (Josh. 1:6-9). At the close of the book Joshua says that he and all his house will serve the LORD and invites the people to choose whether they will serve the gods of their fathers or the gods in whose land they dwell or the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob. The people choose to serve their God. (Josh. 24:15). Although anonymous the book appears to contain eyewitness testimony, some of which may have been written by Joshua himself.

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### JOSHUA 3:1-4

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#### The People of Israel leave Shittim and Camp at the River Jordan.

- **Joshua 3:1-4:** Then Joshua rose early in the morning and they set out from Shittim. And they came to the Jordan, he and all the people of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. <sup>2</sup>At the end of three days the officers went through the camp <sup>3</sup>and commanded the people, "As soon as you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God being carried by the Levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place and follow it. <sup>4</sup>Yet there shall be a distance between you and it, about 2,000 cubits in length. Do not come near it, in order that you may know the way you shall go, for you have not passed this way before."

All the people of Israel camped for three days alongside the River Jordan. Keeping a space of 2000 cubits not only kept everyone at a safe distance from it since should any common person touch the Ark it would destroy them, but also allowed enough space around it for the people to see it.

**The history and different measures of a cubit:** there are varying ideas concerning the exact measurement of a cubit this is because it is not an exact measurement. A cubit is the Hebrew measure of length it arose (as did the English foot) from the simple estimating of distance in terms of the body. Farmers today measure the height of horses by hands. The word cubit comes from the Hebrew word ('ammah). Strong's Concordance states that a cubit is a unit of measure of the fore-arm (below the elbow to the hand) (approximately 12 inches (300mm) while a long cubit is the length of the fore-arm plus the length of the hand (approximately 18 to 20 inches (450 to 500 mm) and a handbreath is the length of the hand (approximately 8 inches (200mm)).

**The Priests Take up the Ark and Go Before the People.**

- **Joshua 3:5-8:** Then Joshua said to the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you." <sup>6</sup>And Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on before the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people. <sup>7</sup>The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. <sup>8</sup>And as for you, command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, "When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan."

The people consecrate themselves ready to cross the River Jordan. The wonders God will do amongst them and the way in which He exalts Joshua so that all the people will know that God is with him as he was with Moses is by parting the River Jordan as He parted the Red Sea.

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**JOSHUA 3:9-10**

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**The LORD will Drive Out the Seven Nations in the Land of Canaan.**

- **Joshua 3:9-10:** And Joshua said to the people of Israel, "Come here and listen to the words of the LORD your God." <sup>10</sup>And Joshua said, "Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you

The seven nations in the land of Canaan were:

1. Canaanites.
2. Hittites.
3. Hivites.
4. Perizzites.
5. Girgashites.
6. Amorites.
7. Jebusites.

Joshua tells the people God without fail will drive out these seven nations before the armies of Israel, but this promise was conditional upon them obeying the LORD'S commandments and remaining faithful to Him. The following verses show that Israel would only succeed if they obeyed God, Joshua commanded the people saying:

- Be careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. <sup>8</sup>This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (Joshua 1:7-8).

All the people of Israel answered Joshua saying:

- Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, we will obey you, may the LORD your God be with you, as he was with Moses! <sup>18</sup>Whoever rebels against your commandment and disobeys your words and your commands shall be put to death. (Josh. 1:16-18).

## The Ark of the Covenant of the LORD is Passing over the Jordan.

- **Joshua 3:11-13:** Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is passing over before you into the Jordan. <sup>12</sup>Now therefore take twelve men from the tribes of Israel, from each tribe a man. <sup>13</sup>And when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap."

Israel was to take one man from each of the twelve tribes so that when the priests carrying the Ark stood in the water each tribe would march behind the man chosen to lead their tribe across the river. There are some Christians who attempt to explain some of the miracles recorded in the Bible in a way that they fit according to the laws of nature as we understand them to be, but this is foolishness since it is the miracles of the Bible that separates the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob from any other god people believe in. Besides this all Christians believe that God created all things so to do anything else outside of the laws of nature is but a simple task indeed. Added to this God dwells outside of our laws of nature and He is the one who established them so to do anything at all that defies our laws of nature, though a miracle to us, is normal for God. One of these great miracles is of course the waters of the River Jordan, flowing downstream suddenly coming to a halt and forming a wall of solid water while Israel passes through it on dry ground. Symbolically this can be seen as the entire new nation of Israel being water baptised before they enter the Promise Land.

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### JOSHUA 3:14-17

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#### Priests with the Ark and all Israel Cross the River Jordan.

- **Joshua 3:14-17:** So when the people set out from their tents to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, <sup>15</sup>and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest), <sup>16</sup>the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho. <sup>17</sup>Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.

Immediately the priests carrying the ark stood in the water the river not only stopped flowing it backed up all the way back to a city named Adam so that the waters were kept at a distance from the Israelites while they crossed into the land of Canaan. We are told that Israel crossed the river opposite the city of Jericho, (the first city Joshua conquered), but the exact spot is unknown. This miracle is made an even greater wonder when it is considered that God stopped the waters of the River Jordan from flowing at a time when the banks of the river overflowed.

**NOTICE:** the waters coming from upstream came from a place called Adam and the water flowing downstream flowed to the Dead Sea where Sodom and Gomorrah formerly were. Symbolically this can be seen as: -

- Israel being baptised, washed and cleansed from all the unbelief and sins of their fathers and being delivered from the barren wilderness and into the Promised Land.
- Sinners while going through the waters of Baptism being washed and cleansed of all the sinful aberrations and dysfunctions that we have all inherited in our fallen corrupted body of flesh from our earthly father Adam and being delivered from death to eternity (the ultimate Promised Land).

The Ark went before all Israel and symbolised God's presence and favour being with the nation and leading and guiding them. It can also be seen as a symbol of Christ going before every faithful believer. The passing through the River Jordan was literally an entrance into the Promised Land, after Israel's long, weary wanderings in the wilderness, figuratively it can be seen as:

- Believers passing through the waters of baptism and entering the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Faithful believer's passing through death to heaven, after they have finished their wanderings through this sinful world.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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